# THE FREE THOUGHTS OF A BURGHER.

WHILE I was paſſing along the ſtreets, there was put into my hands two papers, the on intituled "An addreſs to the citizens of Edinburgh, on the enſuing election of their M——r of P———t;" and the other, "An anſwer to this addreſs." I have looked over them, and am of opinion, That the ſubject there treated of, (being of ſo much importance to this place,) is handled in too ludicrous a manner; and the author, or authors, will forgive me for thinking, that ſome of their jokes might have been diſpenſed with, in order to give place to a thing of far greater moment, and that is, The remedy we ſhould apply to our ſickly conſtitution.

I PERSUADE myſelf, it will be very unneceſſary for to point out the viſible advantages that muſt accrue to the inhabitants of Edinburgh, from their having a repreſentative that will find it his intereſt to conſult their welfare, and in conſequence his own: This is ſo obvious, that I may ſafely affirm, it would be much better not to ſend any, than it would be

be to ſend one who would be of another principle. There is good cauſe therefore to ſuſpect, that a ſtranger, who does not live with us, can never be that perſon we point at; and every oppoſition ought to be made to a propoſal of bringing ſuch a one to repreſent us: But the method to make this oppoſition moſt effectual, ought to be our ſtudy at preſent; for it will not be the publiſhing of pamphlets, ballads, and advertiſements, that will ſave us from this impending danger; there is certainly ſomething more material that will infallibly redeem us; and as this was my purpoſe in writing, I ſhall endeavour to ſtrike out the root from whence all our evils ſpring.

THERE has been a great out-cry againſt the public adminiſtration in this place; and for ſome time paſt, almoſt every tongue declaims againſt their management; how far ſuch declamations are juſt or not, it is not my purpoſe to enquire; but allow me to ſay, That our conſtitution in this city, if it does not incline to do things hurtful to the public good, yet it appears to have almoſt as bad a tendency, and that is, it does not prevent any thing of that kind from being attempted; therefore, I humbly propoſe a ſcheme, which, if it be agreed to, will, without all doubt, contribute to this good purpoſe.

AT preſent, the rulers of this town have the power ſolely lodged in themſelves of naming and electing their ſucceſſors in office; and altho', indeed, the incorporated trades have in ſome meaſure a title to name a man to repreſent each of them, yet, by the rulers having a privilege of ſhortening their leets, this liberty of theirs is no more than a bare ſhow, and the management of this city, by this means, appears to be hereditary to a few; ſince it is not to be ſuppoſed, but when they have this power I have mentioned, they will always

ways chuſe perſons who will ſerve them and their intereſts and keep out every other body. To prevent this evil for the future, I humbly offer my advice, That the merchant company, and the whole of the incorporated trades, together with the other citizens, ſhould preſent a petition to parliament, not only to prevent this ſtranger now ſpoke of from being forced upon us; but alſo craving, That the model of the preſent government of the city may be changed, and that the merchant company may have the chuſing of the ſeventeen counſellors; and the trades may, without having their leets abridged, ſend out fourteen free deacons of their own electing, which fourteen ſhall have the choice of the two remaining trades-counſellors; and the whole thirty-three to be entitled to the liberty of chuſing, from among their own number, the Provoſt, Baillies, &c. and this to be done yearly; and according as any man behaves, he may expect to be taken notice of.

From ſuch an alteration, we have every reaſon to expect, that if any great man ſhall incline to enſlave us, he will find it out of his power to do ſo, as it will be more difficult to gratify ſuch a body of men, who will then become electors, than it is now, when the numbers are ſo ſmall: And I apprehend, it will alſo take away temptation from any one, and thereby keep ſeverals from committing faults, which, I perſuade myſelf, many well-meaning people have been led into from motives of gratitude.

This is my ſcheme, or rather the out-lines of it, and I hope ſome abler hand will proſecute it further, and make it more worthy of appearing in public; in the mean time, I have a ſatisfaction in my own mind, ariſing from the conſciouſneſs of having no ſelfiſh motive in offering my opinion.

A BURGHER.